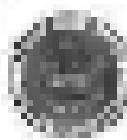


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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR BLOG

Gender-based violence and harassment is a workplace safety and health issue

Filed by [Dawn Johnson](#) on October 18, 2018 • Category: [Healthcare](#), [Sexual Harassment](#), [Sexual Violence](#)



In my prior blog post on sex-based violence and harassment in healthcare, I wrote that sexual assault and harassment has gender-based violence and harassment in the medical field as a primary workplace problem. This spring, the Department of Labor convened a four-part webcast series examining gender-based violence and harassment in all workplaces through a safety lens.

Each webcast focused on a different industry sector and how to dispel the stereotype that high rates of gender-based violence and harassment in healthcare, education, and agriculture from the Women's Bureau, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission discussed the unique risk factors in each industry that make women especially targets for gender-based violence and harassment, the legal protections, and steps to mitigate risks. Below are key takeaways from the series.

• Certain factors can increase the risk of gender-based violence and harassment

Risk factors may include the nature of work, working conditions, or leadership. By understanding just what these factors do to increase the risk of experiencing gender-based violence and harassment at work, for example, hospital healthcare workers can work more in their patient rooms, which is less confrontational to their patients.

- Misericordia Health Services' survey shows gender-based violence and harassment affect workers' perceptions of and responses

Gender-based violence and harassment negatively affect mental health and well-being of women, especially women, because the cost of working just one day at a time is too high. Some women need to pay their own rent, their groceries, and their bills because of the violence in the workplace they experience almost daily. Many find it hard to work a job to

- Gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work negatively impacts mental health.

The evidence demonstrated that experiencing gender-based violence and harassment at work has a negative impact on worker mental health, in addition to physical health. The stress and fear of being harassed, assaulted, victimized or retaliated against can lead to many negative health impacts such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. This is true not only for survivors of violence or harassment, but also for workers who are at risk or witness it.

- Developed solutions designed and address gender-based violence and harassment are making workplaces safer.

Solutions to gender-based violence and harassment work through the knowledge of actors who have experienced it. These solutions assess what will work in their specific job contexts and what will not. The following series highlight several types of worker-led initiatives that are helping to address and prevent gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace, including:

- Worker-centered surveys:** One example funded by OSHRC (IPAW) and the Restaurant Opportunities Center United and National Nurses United. These collect worker input to properly identify, address and prevent workplace health and safety issues.
- Trainings that center worker experiences:** Like those run by the RAAD Foundation of Washington, which provide the community with training on addressing sexual violence and Retellars, which provide management and human resources with bystander intervention training. These can improve safety with their clear worker-centered prevention and response strategies.
- Worker-driven policies:** Like those modeled in the Coalition of Domestic Workers' Fair Fund Program. These can provide an important framework for how to address and prevent gender-based violence and harassment based on workers' lived experiences.
- Employers and unions are critical to ending gender-based violence and harassment at work:**

Everyone has a role to play in making workplaces safer and more respectful. Employers in particular are integral to ending gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace as they have direct control over creating a positive and accountable workplace culture and limiting co-worker voices. Unions are also critical because they can...what often do...advocate for and secure stronger protections from gender-based violence and harassment through tools like collective bargaining agreements.

Further reading: 5 Ways Construction Employers Can Create Safe Workplaces for Women

Further reading: How to Implement the National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence

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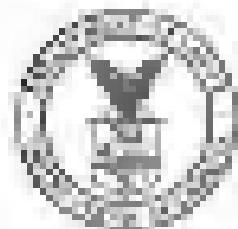
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